

Message Text

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S/S - R. GAMMON

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LA PAZ IMMEDIATE

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, BL

SUBJECT: GUARANTEEING BOLIVIAN NEUTRALITY

REF: LA PAZ 5772

1. DEPARTMENT APPRECIATES SERIOUSNESS OF REQUEST MADE BY PRESIDENT BANZER CONCERNING BOLIVIA'S TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND THE POTENTIAL DANGERS THERETO IN THE EVENT OF HOSTILITIES BETWEEN PERU AND CHILE. UNFORTUNATELY, WE CANNOT IN ANY WAY ENCOURAGE PRESIDENT BANZER TO BELIEVE THAT ANY UNITED STATES GUARANTEE OF BOLIVIA'S NEUTRALITY CAN BE FORTHCOMING. REALISTICALLY, UNITED STATES OBLIGATIONS AS TO BOLIVIA'S NEUTRALITY MUST BE LIMITED TO THOSE ALREADY PROVIDED UNDER THE INTER-AMERICAN TREATY OF RECIPROCAL ASSISTANCE (RIO TREATY). ANY SORT OF BILATERAL GUARANTY BEYOND THE TREATY WOULD RAISE SERIOUS CONGRESSIONAL AND POLICY PROBLEMS.

2. THE OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE RIO TREATY ARE, OF COURSE, CONSIDERABLE. MOST IMPORTANT, UNDER ARTICLE 3 EACH OF THE
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PARTIES AGREES THAT AN ARMED ATTACK BY ANY STATE AGAINST

ANY OTHER AMERICAN STATE IS CONSIDERED AS AN ATTACK AGAINST ALL, AND EACH PARTY UNDERTAKES TO ASSIST IN MEETING THE ATTACK. THIS OBLIGATION RUNS NOT ONLY TO THE UNITED STATES BUT ALSO TO THE OTHER PARTIES TO THE RIO TREATY. THE RIO TREATY ALSO PROVIDES AN EXTENSIVE MECHANISM FOR DEALING

NOT ONLY WITH ARMED ATTACKS, BUT WITH OTHER THREATS TO THE PEACE, AND THE UNITED STATES WOULD ANTICIPATE THAT IN THE EVENT OF A CONFLICT BETWEEN PERU AND CHILE THE MEMBERS OF THE RIO TREATY WOULD BECOME SEIZED OF THE ISSUE AND TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION "FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY OF THE CONTINENT." (SEE ARTICLES 3, 6, 8 AND 11.)

3. DEPARTMENT WILL WANT TO CONSIDER FURTHER APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE FOR RESPONDING TO PRESIDENT BANZER'S REQUEST, ESPECIALLY WITH RESPECT TO ANY "MORAL SUPPORT" WE MAY BE ABLE TO PROVIDE. WE MIGHT ALSO WISH TO USE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO SEEK BOLIVIA'S SUPPORT FOR USG EFFORTS IN OAS SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO MAINTAIN MAXIMUM PRACTICAL AND MORAL AUTHORITY FOR RIO TREATY BY RESISTING ANY CHANGES WHICH MIGHT UNDERMINE ITS EFFECTIVENESS AS INSTRUMENT FOR PRESERVING PEACE AND SECURITY IN THE HEMISPHERE. INGERSOLL

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